



## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2021-0374; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00543-R]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Helicopters Model SA330J, AS332C, AS332L, AS332L1, AS332L2, and EC225LP helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by a report of a left-hand (LH) side stairway door that inadvertently opened in flight and tore off from its attachment fittings. This proposed AD would require inspecting the locking safety mechanism of the LH side stairway door handle and depending on the results, corrective action. This proposed AD would also require modifying that locking safety mechanism as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material that is proposed for IBR in this AD, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. It is also available in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0374.

#### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0374; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 950 L'Enfant Plaza N SW, Washington, DC 20024; telephone (202) 267-9167; email [hal.jensen@faa.gov](mailto:hal.jensen@faa.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Comments Invited**

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2021-0374; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00543-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this proposal.

### **Confidential Business Information**

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 950 L’Enfant Plaza N SW, Washington, DC 20024; telephone (202) 267-9167; email [hal.jensen@faa.gov](mailto:hal.jensen@faa.gov). Any

commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

## **Discussion**

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020-0087, dated April 15, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0087), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Helicopters (AH), formerly Eurocopter, Eurocopter France, Aerospatiale, Sud Aviation Model SA330J, AS332C, AS332L, AS332L1, AS332L2, and EC225LP helicopters, if equipped with a LH side stairway door, except helicopters modified in accordance with AH modification (MOD) 07 28281 (AS 332, EC 225) or MOD 07 27338 (SA 330). EASA issued EASA AD 2020-0087 to supersede EASA Emergency AD 2014-0241-E, dated November 4, 2014 (EASA AD 2014-0241-E).

This proposed AD was prompted by a report of a LH side stairway door that inadvertently opened and tore off from its attachment fittings during flight. Subsequent investigation revealed that the affected side stairway door had been recently painted and the paint impaired the external door handle motion, affecting the correct operation of the door locking safety mechanism. The FAA is proposing this AD to address incorrect locking of the LH side stairway door, which could result in an in-flight opening of the door and subsequent damage to the helicopter or injury to persons on the ground. See EASA AD 2020-0087 for additional background information.

## **Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51**

EASA AD 2020-0087 requires repetitively inspecting the locking safety mechanism of the LH side stairway door handle for correct operation and depending on the results, reconditioning the locking safety mechanism or contacting the Airbus Helicopters Support and Services Department. EASA AD 2020-0087 also requires

modifying the locking safety mechanism, which constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

### **FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD**

These products have been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, the FAA has been notified of the unsafe condition described in the EASA AD referenced above. The FAA is proposing this AD after evaluating all the relevant information and determining the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of these same type designs.

### **Proposed AD Requirements**

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2020-0087, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD and except as discussed under "Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD."

### **Explanation of Required Compliance Information**

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA initially worked with Airbus and EASA to develop a process to use certain EASA ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has since coordinated with other manufacturers and civil aviation authorities (CAAs) to use this process. As a result, EASA AD 2020-0087 will be incorporated by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2020-0087 in its entirety, through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of

this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in the EASA AD does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in the EASA AD. Service information specified in EASA AD 2020-0087 that is required for compliance with EASA AD 2020-0087 will be available on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0374 after the FAA final rule is published.

### **Differences Between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD**

Where EASA AD 2020-0087 refers to the effective date of EASA AD 2014-0214-E or its effective date, this proposed AD would require using the effective date of this AD. Where EASA AD 2020-0087 refers to Group 1 and 2 helicopters, this proposed AD would not refer to any groups of helicopters. Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 allows the pilot to perform the requirements of the ASB, this proposed AD would require the requirements to be performed by a qualified mechanic. Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement. Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 specifies to discard certain parts, this proposed AD would require removing those parts from service instead. EASA AD 2020-0087 requires repeating the inspection before next flight after each application of painting on the LH side stairway door or its external door handle, whereas this proposed AD would not. EASA AD 2020-0087 requires contacting the Airbus Helicopters Support and Services Department if it is impossible to recondition the locking safety mechanism by moving the door handle, whereas this proposed AD would require, before further flight, accomplishing paragraph (5) of EASA AD 2020-

0087 or accomplishing corrective action using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA. The Manager's approval letter must specifically refer to this AD.

### **Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 37 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this proposed AD.

Inspecting the operation of the locking safety mechanism on the LH side stairway door handle would take about 0.1 work-hour for an estimated cost of \$9 per helicopter and \$333 for the U.S. fleet.

Moving the external door handle from the "Locked" to the "Unlocked" position to determine if the safety mechanism on the LH side stairway door handle can lock automatically would take about 0.5 work-hour for an estimated cost of \$43 per helicopter.

Modifying the locking safety mechanism on the LH side stairway door handle would take about 8 work-hours and parts would cost about \$5,000 for an estimated cost of \$5,680 per helicopter.

### **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority

because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

### **Regulatory Findings**

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

### **The Proposed Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

#### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

#### **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

**Airbus Helicopters:** Docket No. FAA-2021-0374; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-00543-R.



**(a) Comments Due Date**

The FAA must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

**(b) Affected Airworthiness Directives (ADs)**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model SA330J, AS332C, AS332L, AS332L1, AS332L2, and EC225LP helicopters, certificated in any category, as identified in the Applicability of European Union Aviation Safety Agency AD 2020-0087, dated April 15, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0087).

**(d) Subject**

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code: 5210, Passenger/Crew Doors.

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by a report of a left-hand (LH) side stairway door that inadvertently opened and tore off from its attachment fittings during flight. The FAA is issuing this AD to address incorrect locking of the LH side stairway door, which could result in an in-flight opening of the door and subsequent damage to the helicopter or injury to persons on the ground.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Requirements**

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2020-0087.

**(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020-0087**

(1) Where EASA AD 2020-0087 refers to November 6, 2014 (the effective date of EASA AD 2014-0241-E, dated November 4, 2014) or its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2020-0087 refers to Group 1 and Group 2 helicopters, this AD does not refer to any groups of helicopters.

(3) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 permits certain actions to be performed by a mechanical engineering technician or pilot, this AD requires that the actions be performed by a qualified mechanic.

(4) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 specifies to discard certain parts, this AD requires removing those parts from service.

(5) While paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2020-0087 requires actions before next flight after each application of painting on the LH side stairway door or its external door handle, those actions are not required by this AD.

(6) Where paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0087 requires reconditioning the locking safety mechanism, and the service information referenced in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0087 specifies contacting the Airbus Helicopters Support and Services Department if it is impossible to recondition the locking safety mechanism by moving the door handle, this AD requires moving the external door handle from the “Locked” to the “Unlocked” position to determine if the safety mechanism can lock automatically. If the safety mechanism does not lock automatically, this AD requires, before further flight accomplishing paragraph (5) of EASA AD 2020-0087 or accomplishing corrective action using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA. The Manager’s approval letter must specifically refer to this AD.

(7) Where paragraph (5) of EASA AD 2020-0087 identifies the modification as required by paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2020-0087 as terminating action for the repetitive inspections as required by paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2020-0087 for that helicopter, this AD does not allow the modification to terminate the repetitive inspections as required by paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2020-0087.

(8) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2020-0087 does not apply to this AD.

**(i) No Reporting Requirement**

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2020-0087 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

**(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)**

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(1) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

**(k) Related Information**

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Hal Jensen, Aerospace Engineer, Operational Safety Branch, FAA, 950 L'Enfant Plaza N SW, Washington, DC 20024; telephone (202) 267-9167; email hal.jensen@faa.gov.

(2) For EASA AD 2020-0087, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet [www.easa.europa.eu](http://www.easa.europa.eu). You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817)

222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at

<https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0374.

Issued on May 15, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciortino, Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives,  
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.

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